

No. 477 - June 20, 1975

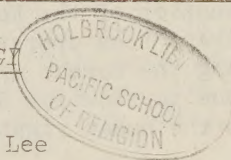
IN THIS ISSUE:

Reaction to Liberation Theology
Okinawa and Ocean Expo
Miscellaneous News
Headline-Making Events

A POSITIVE REACTION TO LIBERATION THEOLOGY

---Dr. James Cone Visits Japan---

by In Ha Lee



Dr. James Cone, a leading black theologian in the U.S. and a professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York, visited Japan for three weeks in May. He came to Japan at the invitation of the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ), in cooperation with the Japan-North America Commission on Cooperative Mission (JNAC). In large and small meetings in Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto and Fukuoka, audience reactions varied. But one common reaction was that Dr. Cone's message came as "a fresh breeze in theologically rather sterile times". Dr. In Ha Lee, moderator of the KCCJ, presents one such positive reaction here. The following remarks were translated by Ms. Akiko Yamaguchi from an interview she did for the June issue of Oikoumene, an NCCJ monthly.

-----eds.

The Purpose of Dr. Cone's Visit: The KCCJ invited Dr. Cone to Japan to initiate a three-year leadership training program for church laity. The Korean Church is struggling to establish its theology. We are seeking to clarify the relationship between the Gospel and our identity as Koreans. For these reasons, we knew we could learn from his liberation theology and the search for identity within black oppression. But it was also our pleasure to share his gifts with the Japanese Churches.

The Reflections of the Churches: There seemed to be a sharp distinction between the reactions to Dr. Cone by Korean and Japanese Christians. In the Korean Church, even lay members without much education, received his challenge in a deep sense. They understood Dr. Cone and the central message of his theology. They welcomed him with considerable excitement and expectation. The Japanese audiences, on the other hand, were mostly interested in Dr. Cone's presentations as a means to keep up on recent developments in the world of western theology. Dr. Cone himself noted this distinction in his audiences and mentioned that he could easily tell which group was his audience on a given day.

At the Symposium: Despite a general transportation strike in early May, there were more than 50 participants at a symposium co-sponsored by the KCCJ and the National Christian Council of Japan (NCCJ). Dr. Cone spoke on the theme of what it means to be saved, followed by three reactors. The Rev. Hisashi Kajiwara of Ichinomiya reacted in terms of theology which takes the given historical situation as its starting point. With this starting point, he said, theology includes radical demands. He then examined the present situation of the Japanese churches in terms of these demands. He stressed that the churches should find the possibility for Christian community within the contexts of (1) solidarity with people's movements for liberation, and (2) the search for true humanity.

Dr. Yoshinobu Kumazawa agreed with Dr. Cone that salvation means human

(cont'd)

EDITORS:

Subscriptions: JAPAN ¥1,500; OVERSEAS Airmail \$8.00, Seamail \$6.00

John Nakajima, Jim Stentzel, Lee Seaman

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL Room 24, 3-18 Nishiwaseda 2-chome Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160 Japan

NOTE: Permission to reprint is granted to all media on conditions that (1) full credit is given and (2) a copy is sent to the editors.

DR. JAMES CONE (cont'd)

liberation in which every person can live as a true human being. He agreed that to be oppressed means to be "covered" and that liberation means to be "uncovered". With these understandings, Dr. Kumazawa pursued three lines of questioning: regarding understanding of the poor (whether they should be seen in the context of class struggle or not), concerning the structure of Dr. Cone's theology of reconciliation, and regarding the points of commonness and difference between the struggles of Koreans and blacks.

The Rev. Kim Kei Ho emphasized how Dr. Cone's liberation theology spoke to the situation of the Korean Churches in Japan. He said that the Japanese churches have always been oppressive of Korean Christians. He cited numerous examples including the Korean mission of the pre-war *Kumiai* (Congregational) churches; religious persecution during the war; and the present-day indifference of Christians to the human rights of Koreans in Japan.

Dr. Cone's response to these reactions was interesting but, unfortunately, did not include full development of how he saw his theology applying within the Japanese context.

Impressions that Remain: Dr. Cone drew some interesting comparisons between the situation of blacks in the U.S. and Koreans in Japan. He noted especially that while the blacks are *forced* to struggle (because they cannot escape their blackness in a white society), the Koreans have *chosen* to struggle (refusing the option of assimilation into Japanese culture). He said this gave the Korean struggle a certain strength, integrity and freedom--qualities which can make a deep impression on movements of oppressed people throughout the world. We Koreans were encouraged by his expectations of us--and we saw the need to build up our own theology.

Dr. Cone's remarks seemed like a challenge to the Japanese churches, as he insisted that doing theology means to live in the dynamics between the oppressed and the oppressors. Theology starts from the actual situation, not from theological terms or principles like love, faith or redemption.

For both Koreans and Japanese, Dr. Cone's visit was significant in that he made us realize how much we have been influenced--and been made powerless--by well-balanced western theology. Dr. Cone taught us to experience God who works in and through history. We are well-accustomed to the views of western theologians who minimize or ignore the dynamics between the oppressed and the oppressors. When we can realize how such theology has paralyzed us, then we can know the importance of listening to the voices of the Third World.

* * * * *

REPORT FROM OKINAWA - PART I

by Ryoken Nago

(Under the 27-year U.S. Occupation that ended in 1972, militarism was the key industry that defined the "development" of Okinawa. Since 1972, with the celebrated reversion to Japanese political rule, tourism has become the new catchword of Okinawan "development". In both cases the decisions were made by powerful outsiders--first in Washington, then in Tokyo. And in both cases the effect on Okinawans has been to benefit a few and to add to the suffering of many. Today, Okinawa continues to be a key military fortress, overlaid with Tokyo-based capitalist ventures centering on an International Ocean Exposition (Expo '75, scheduled to open next month). The following is a translated article written for JCAN by the Rev. Ryoken Nago, pastor of the Futemma Baptist Church and editor of the Okinawa Baptist. In our next issue, Part II will examine the

(cont'd)

OKINAWA (cont'd)

military situation in Okinawa. -----Eds.

Okinawa's citizens are presently in a great dilemma. I say that because the merits of reversion to the mainland in 1972 have not been very great when seen from the point of view of daily life, which is where the reversion is emotionally received. Along with reversion, the effects of spiraling increases in commodity prices, a world-wide "post-oil shock" phenomenon, has been great.

Okinawa is now entering a second transition period. The first period, beginning in the 16th century and extending over 300 years, was an era tending towards assimilation into Japan, the Japanization era. In this period Okinawans moved to fall into their place as a people of the Imperial domain under the authority of the Japanese state. It was perhaps an auspicious time. But the unfortunate aspects of the second period are now dominant: military bases, reversion, Expo '75--these are casting dark shadows over Okinawa.

(1) Post Reversion Development -- Expo's Influence

"Reversion -- Okinawa Development Program -- the spectacle of inexorable collapse in connection with Expo". These expressions completely describe contemporary Okinawa. "The International Ocean Exposition is not only a great force for international exchange and tourism programs along with the exploitation of the ocean's resources. It is also a precipitator of wide social developments affecting daily life as well as industrial development over a wide portion of the northern sections (of Okinawa)."

These lines are drawn from the Plan for Okinawa Development. The original plan was drawn up by the prefectural governor and concluded by the Prime Minister. It is an unabashed "Hymn of Expo." In that plan many of the harsh realities of Okinawa's situation are put into the abstract, and the so-called "primer cap for Okinawan development" theory is promulgated. Mr. Kato, the Associate Director of the Development Bureau speaks of his "desire for smooth growth and the progressive development of secondary industries." Regarding the manner of post-reversion development (centered on Expo-related enterprises) and the influence on the natural environment, even while acknowledging the minus factors he stresses that the merits are numerous.

Kato says the plan is in accord with a basic policy of redressing the gap between Okinawa and the mainland. He points to harbors, roads, airports, dams, water facilities and the like. On the other hand there is a prefectural perspective that declares "support for local autonomy" and "bear the pain to block rising prices". And although the President of the Okinawa Branch of the Bank of Japan says, "The only thing we can expect is tourism; the unemployment problem is extremely serious," those with political party connections are generally cool toward Expo. On April 28 the Fisherman's Association issued a demand to the prefecture for the safe-guarding of the citizen's livelihood during Expo. Meanwhile the prefectural exchequer is presently under continual, severe strain because of the outlay of funds for Expo.

In connection with post-reversion development there is a serious youth problem. It is reported that schools in the northern region (near the Expo site) already have a serious dilemma of how best to lead students. One clear example of the youth problem was a recent ugly and villanous attack on some young girls by a teen-age gang. The perpetrators of the offense were youthful laborers brought here from the mainland by the Expo employment bureau. This was a great shock to local society.

Thus there are many problems in local society, in the educational environment, in commodity price rises, and in such other areas as public transportation.

(cont'd)

OKINAWA (cont'd)

The precise situation is that Okinawa is on the verge of a panic. The agricultural crisis continues to deepen as farm land becomes more scarce. In spite of all that, Expo will open. For whose benefit is it really?

* * * * *

JOINT PRAYER MEETING EXPRESSES CONCERN FOR SUFFERING KOREAN CHRISTIANS

Over 20 major denominations, Christian organizations and action groups united June 14 to sponsor a prayer meeting in support of Korean Christians. Participants at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Mary's in Tokyo included the Catholic Justice and Peace Council and the Korean Christian Church in Japan. The two-hour meeting was led by Archbishop Peter Seichi Shirayanagi, Catholic Primate of Japan. Nearly 500 people attended.

Participants' deep-felt concern over recent developments in Korea was highlighted when lawyer Kenichi Nakadaira conveyed a verbal message from the prisoners awaiting trial in Seoul. "We are very encouraged by the world-wide Christian actions and prayers supporting us," he reported them saying. "Do not worry, because we are given courage from God Himself even in our prison cells."

Nakadaira recently went to Seoul as an observer for the German Bread for the World. He went to report on the first trial of Rev. Kim Kwan Sook, general secretary of the Korean National Christian Council, and three other pastors. The four were arrested on April 2.

Mother of Kim Chi Ha, Catholic poet, expressed her gratitude towards Japanese Christians for their support, Nakadaira reported.

Later in the day the prayer meeting received brief coverage by major TV networks and newspapers.

* * * * *

The first session in the trial of four Korean churchmen accused of misusing Bread for the World funds (see JCAN No. 475, April 18, No. 476, June 5) was held in a crowded courtroom in Seoul on Tuesday, June 10, but lasted only 25 minutes, being adjourned with the announcement that the next session would be held two weeks later--in a larger courtroom.

Kenkichi Nakadaira, Tokyo attorney who attended as an observer at the request of the Bread for the World agency (headquarters in Germany), reported that the only matter taken up was the confirmation of the identity of the four men, who were present in court and appeared to be well and in good spirits. Nakadaira noted that an unusual feature of this session was the fact that reporters, photographers and even TV cameras were admitted.

* * * * *

KANSAI SEMINAR ON BUDDHISM SCHEDULED

The second English-language seminar on Buddhism will be held by the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions at Kansai Seminar House in Kyoto October 3-4. The seminar, open to foreign missionaries and others, will focus on Jo-dō Shinshu, one of the largest and most important branches of Japanese Buddhism. ¥5000 for the overnight stay and three meals, ¥2500 for those who do not stay overnight. Couples welcome. For applications and recommended reading, contact: The NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, c/o Kyoto Diocese of Japan Episcopal Church, Karasuma-Shimotachiuri, Kamikyo-ku, Kyoto 602. Reservations should be made by July 31.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

A group of Koreans in Japan is moving to improve communications among the Korean minority here. The Association to Fight Discrimination (Minzoku Sabetsu to Tatakau Renraku Kyogikai, or Min To Ren) will work to build regional organizations throughout Japan, focusing primarily on the industrial belt from Sendai through Tokyo-Kawasaki, Nagoya, Osaka-Hyogo and Kita-Kyushu. Area groups already exist in the Tokyo and Osaka areas.

The research-Action Institute for the Koreans in Japan (RAIK) is compiling and publishing Japanese-language newsletters for Min To Ren under a grant from the World Council of Churches Program to Combat Racism. The first newsletter is now available from RAIK, Japan Christian Center, 2-3-18 Nishiwaseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160. Price ¥100 + ¥55 for postage (subject to change) within Japan.

Articles focus on the situation of Koreans in Japan in general, and on particular cases of discrimination against individuals.

RAIK has published a handbook in English dealing with attitudes of Japanese and Koreans towards each other. The study, by Bae Ho Hahn and Sung Chick Hong of Korea University, deals primarily with a group of Koreans living in the Osaka area. It discusses their attitudes towards life in Japan and towards Japanese people, and points up how these attitudes seem to depend on age and education level of respondents. The authors also touch on traditional Japanese prejudices towards Koreans demonstrated by the press, the police force and other institutions. *The Korean Minority in Japan: Their Problems, Aspirations, and Prospects*. Write RAIK (see above). ¥500 + ¥55 postage.

Father Hugh Leonard is taking to the air, broadcasting a series of radio programs based on his *Discover Life in Songs* book (JCAN #458, Aug. 16, 1974.) The book appeared about two years ago and dealt with popular songs as a means of pre-evangelization. The second edition has been sold out and another book is being prepared. The radio programs are presently being broadcast over Ibaragi Hoso (Radio) every Saturday night at 10:30.

The programs are in Japanese and treat a popular song with the aim of provoking reflection on an important theme. Love, loneliness, youth, and death are discussed over the air by MC Fr. Leonard and two young guests.

The programs provide possible discussion material for church youth or school groups. The discussion participants are drawn from high school, university and young working people. New participants appear on each program.

Ninety-minute cassette tapes are available of the programs, with six programs on one tape. For information on program titles, themes and cost, write: Radio Programs, Tomobe Catholic Church, 1071 Ota Machi, Tomobe, Ibaragi-ken 309-17. TEL 02967-7-0047.

(from the *Tosai News*)

For those who like to sing--or to listen--Pauline Smith McAlpine has completed a translation of 50 well-loved Japanese hymns from the 1954 *Sanbika*. The hymns have been translated into rhythmic, "singable" English, and the book also includes a short history of Japanese hymnists and early missionaries. ¥1300 plus postage (¥160 within Japan). Write: Tsunobue-sha, 33 Chikara-machi 4-chome, Higashi-ku, Nagoya 461.

* * * * *

HEADLINE-MAKING EVENTS

by Chisato Koriyama

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER SATO---Many Japanese, on hearing the "wife beating" charge leveled at Prime Minister Sato by his wife several years ago, entered a heated discussion concerning the degree of "strength" of Eisaku Sato. When people heard that Mr. Sato had collapsed into a coma and after a long struggle died (June 3) they began to discuss his contributions to Japanese politics and to world peace. It was said of him, "Until the political situation moved in the direction he wanted, he just waited". As a result, by causing the powerful faction leaders in the government party to compete among themselves, he was able to rule over them and control the cabinet longer than any modern Japanese political party leader. While proclaiming his goal of political and economic harmony, he achieved miraculous economic growth which was far from harmonious. Also, while struggling against the forces of reform, he was successful in persuading America to return Okinawa without nuclear weapons which was one of the goals of the reformist forces. (Since America did not clearly state there were no nuclear weapons there, it is still possible, some say, that nuclear weapons are present in Okinawa.) Because he did not actively oppose American involvement in Vietnam he was attacked by opposition forces in Japan. Therefore the news that he was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize (1974) and his decision to join Amnesty International (this spring) greatly surprised the Japanese people. He often said the value of a man is decided at the time the coffin lid is lowered. But the value of the man who said these words is not yet clearly established.

THE YOUNG REDISCOVER MOVIES---Twenty years after the death of actor Tsumasaburo Bando (Bantsuma), much interest is being aroused by a film festival held in his memory in Tokyo. Not only elderly fans but young people in their 20's and 30's are showing interest. This tendency is the same one observed in the encore reception given to films featuring Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. Japan's younger generation has been raised on television since birth, so television holds little fascination. They have discovered surprise and fascination watching the wide screen in a dark theater. (Elderly fans no longer feel this.) Gathering together to watch Bantsuma and Chaplin is an expression of their intellectual search for a new entertainment media, says the *Asahi Shimbun*.

NEW CHAIRMAN OF JAPAN PEN CLUB---The Japan Pen Club has continued in a state of confusion since the membership divided over the stand to be taken towards the arrest of Korean poet Kim Chi Ha. Members have been steadily resigning but many new members, bent on reform, have been joining the club. Seeking to resolve the confusion, the trustees have officially installed Tatsuzo Ishikawa, a writer, as chairman. The "Ishikawa Administrative Staff" added one of the many new members, writer Akiyuki Nozaka, as a standing trustee. The actions of the new administration will be closely watched.

BOMBING SUSPECTS ARRESTED---The Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, which has been investigating a series of bombings of buildings since last August, recently arrested almost all of the suspects. The outline of the group of bombers is now clear. The suspects who were arrested were ordinary office workers and working wives. Their neighbors were not only without suspicion, but some of them were quite familiar with the suspects. If they were truly criminals, then it is possible, in the extreme, that Japanese will become unable to trust other people. If one's normal, friendly neighbor can be a terrorist in his hidden life, then what is the meaning of "neighbor"?